



Khayden Otter: Bringing a Nation together





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The Hatfields & the McCoys:

Mohawk style

By Steve Bonspiel

In mid-January, Native police officers from 18 different reserves across Quebec arrived in Kanesatake Mohawk Territory for a classified operation. In the process, the Police Chief, Tracy Cross, was demoted for being too lax in crime fighting and replaced by former Kanesatake Police Chief Terry Isaac. Dissidents arrived and barricaded the police in the station. A two-day standoff ensued, and Chief James Gabriel's house was burned down in the frenzy. Kahnawake Peacekeepers, who took over from the besieged Kanesatake Mohawk Police, have yet to arrest any suspects.

Incidents like these stem from years of power struggles within the community. The people that opposed the cops in this instance did so because they felt their "businesses" were threatened. The police are not immune to the struggle for power. Bad blood between families plays a large role in this struggle as well. Whatever your last name is, chances are you hold a grudge against another family.

The best way to describe the longstanding situation in this tiny Mohawk settlement of 1,800 people would be to compare it to the infamous feud in the late 1800s between the Hatfields and the McCoys. The feud had a common theme relating to present-day Kanesatake: control of land, and being able to flourish economically.

Whichever side of the fence you're on, jealousy tends to rear its ugly head. Before cigarette shacks were littered all over the territory, jealousy was aimed at those precious few who were able to become relatively wealthy by having the gumption to start their own business on the reserve.

Those who chose to wallow in self-pity and spew hate towards the rest of the community, especially those who became successful, are some of the same people who are now dealing drugs, committing crimes, and causing a rift within the community. The economic power is shifting.

The Kanesatake I grew up in can be compared to the proverbial bucket of lobsters. Whenever one tried to climb out of the bucket (by making a better life for themselves), he or she would get pulled right back in.

Infighting is something both the federal and provincial governments promote quietly. This factor can almost single-handedly be blamed for tearing our Native communities apart from within. Divide and conquer is a tactic Native people know all too well. Voicing your opposition to something in a democratic way is the norm in almost every other city or town in North America, but in Kanesatake and a lot of other reserves, it is the exception to the rule.

Case in point: the situation at the police station in mid-January. Rumours abounded that 60-plus police officers were stationed in the Mohawk Police station and were getting ready to go after the criminal element.

To most people, this sounded like something that needed to be done. A handful of criminals refused to let this happen by becoming bat-wielding

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Khayden's walk in Waspanipi...
Chief Robert Kitchen

vigilantes. The agreement Quebec signed to end the siege let all police officers go free, but they were told not to come back. This ridiculous response seemed to say, "If you don't like something, take the law into your own hands and we'll listen." What did this say to the community and the rest of Quebec? The vigilantes had won.

James Gabriel was said to have been unhappy about the growing number of cigarette shacks in Kanesatake. I see nothing illegal in the sale of cigarettes. We've been put on these postage stamp size reserves with little or no natural resources. Profiting off of a product that people are going to buy anyways is the least of Kanesatake's worries. Besides, we've been using tobacco as a means to barter with other Nations long before the United States or Canada even existed.

Getting rid of the drugs and criminal activity should be a higher priority. Criminal activity has terrorized the innocent people of Kanesatake for too long now. Residents are scared to go anywhere in fear of these thugs.

It's a deeply troubling sign within the community now that these criminals realize they can bully the police as well, with the support of the Quebec government.

OF MACHINES AND GIGGLY GIRLS



By Sonny Orr

My hands soiled with grease and grime, I mutter things that could send me to hell into the next eternity. Why do machines have to break so easily? Oh the humanity! Why have we grown more dependent on machinery to take over nearly all aspects of the work we used to toil over and tire us out by the end of the day? It seems that machines, in all its' glory and convenience, tend to make life more difficult when they don't work rather than make life easier and simpler, as they are supposed to do. Even computers, the maven of modern technology, takes away the need to memorize everything, then again, making our minds more mushier as the years go by. The mind is a terrible thing to waste, especially when it is hooked on the screen and scanning for the last file you saved. I know it's here somewhere, I know I e-mailed that last Reznotes, sometimes I cry to the editor (who knows that if it is not there, that I will suffer the consequences of having some lurid photo of me displayed to all the nation and I will have to endure the taunting that goes on behind my back...theme from psycho is playing...) The missing screw, today, is akin to the missing link in human evolution, and if and when the scenario that the Terminator series depicts ever becomes reality, we just have to phase out mechanics and computer wizards to end it all right there and save the world.

Yes, technology does have its boundaries and they are set by the amount of human ingenuity and ability of the human mind to continually come up with creative ways to bring life to machines. As I begrudgingly acknowledge, the price that machines and technology play is steep, starting with my muscles and the soggy grey mass I call a brain, then the ability of my bank account to grow to purchase all this technology. I may sound old fashioned, but give me back my dog team and paddle in exchange for the skidoo

and outboard motor. Give me back the solace of the wind in exchange of the rumbling of a fan convected current wafting through a dirty vent. Give me back my humanity and I'll be happy.

Don't get me wrong, I like machines and technology, I just don't like the fact that sometimes, I have no choice but to use it. It is simpler to flick a light switch than to choke on acrid smoke from the improperly burning wick, blackening the clear funnel of a lamp, then again, how easy is it to generate electricity? I'm glad that I don't have to work for Hydro Quebec and be responsible for the lame excuses when blackouts occur. Who ever heard of solar winds knocking out transmission lines and satellites? Hydro Quebec, that's who. Perhaps those crazy loonies at the Solar Temple have some credence when they claim that extraterrestrial forces (albeit natural forces) are the real culprit.

As I write these notes, the melodious sound of giggling girls from the office interrupt my train of thought. Aren't they supposed to be hard at work, or is it the way, we as Crees, tend to carry out work and duties? I know, that in the somber atmosphere of the southern office complexes, laughing is no laughing matter. Seriousness has a place somewhere near the top of the corporate ladder and laughing out loud is not one that is considered a virtue. But it seems to work here, in the north, where everything is taken in stride and with a laugh to throw in for good measure, things do get done. Perhaps it is the very thing that made us who we are today, a nation that is growing very rapidly into a power of the north.

Machines do have their place in the Cree lifestyle and I'm not sure where it lays exactly, but everywhere I look, feel and hear, there is the drone of a machine somewhere. Give me the sound of a giggling girl any day.

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Khayden Otter:

Bringing a Nation together

By Steve Bonspiel

Violence has become so common in our society that when it happens, no one bats an eyelash. That is until it happens to an innocent two-and-a-half-year-old baby boy.

The disgusting feeling people in Eeyou Istchee have in their stomachs is the disbelief that something like this could happen so close to home.

On February 8, Trevor Eric Spencer, 28, is alleged to have beaten little Khayden Otter of Waswanipi so bad he was found unconscious and had to be airlifted to the Montreal Children's Hospital. Spencer, who was one of Khayden's foster parents, has since been charged with aggravated assault and is currently being held in Amos. He is scheduled to appear in court on March 9th.

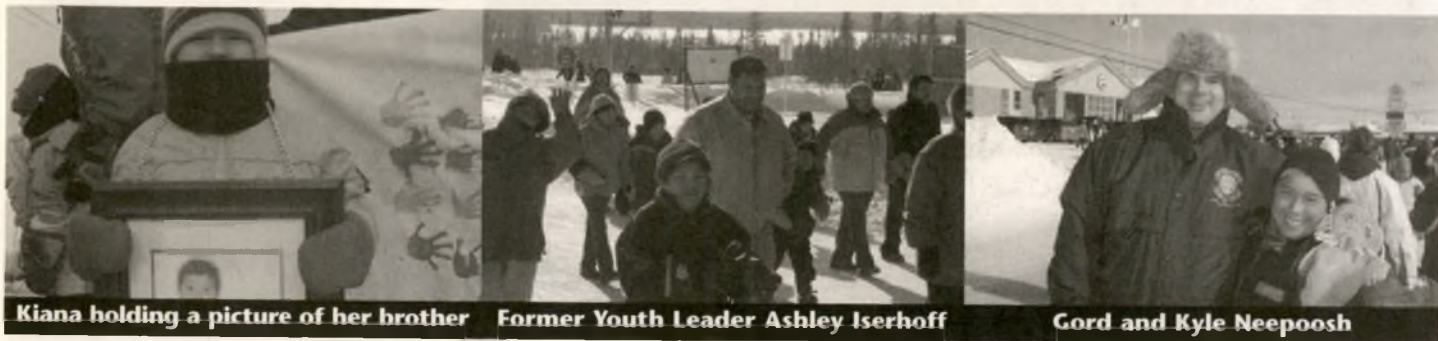
Spencer has a previous conviction for assault in his former hometown of Winnipeg in 2001. He moved to Waswanipi within the last year from Manitoba to meet and marry a local woman. He

was left to care for Khayden in his new wife's foster home.

Ronnie Otter, Khayden's grandfather, recounted the time when he received the terrible news: "My wife and I got a call from a social worker to say hurry up, something has happened to Khayden. The doctors and nurses worked on him for about an hour and a half trying to revive him. He had intravenous in his arms, and an oxygen tube in his nose. We started calling around to relatives to let them know what had happened." At the time Khayden's mother, Judy Otter, was babysitting in Sudbury and trying to get into night school.

Otter said that the day he got to the hospital, the little boy's brain was so swollen they had to remove part of his skull so the swelling could go down. Once it goes down, they will then re-attach the skull and sew the skin back into place.

He also said that Khayden had been trying to communicate to



Kiana holding a picture of her brother

Former Youth Leader Ashley Iserhoff

Gord and Kyle Neepoosh

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The Otter and Rupert Families at the Montreal Children's Hospital

the family with his eyes. "They aren't wide open, but they're open," said Otter. "He's improving a little bit; he's a little fighter. We just keep praying for him."

On February 12, another test was done and the news was very sad. The doctors informed both families that Khayden's brain was severely damaged, and if he woke up, he would not be the same little Khayden anymore.

"We were all shocked, a lot of us got emotional and cried. We all sat together and prayed for Khayden to pull through," Otter said.

The family has been told to keep massaging his limbs in hopes of getting the feeling back.

On February 22, doctors removed the tube in his head and reduced his antibiotics. Little Khayden Otter was fighting to see his family again.

The next day a therapist came in and started to help Khayden along by moving his arms and stretching his legs up to his chest. This is something they will do daily until he wakes up.

Khayden was slated to undergo an operation February 25 to sew up some of the skin around his skull. This will be done to prevent the brain from being infected more than it already has.

There was a huge outpouring of emotion and support for the boy when every community in Eeyou Istchee decided to stage a

"walk against violence" on his behalf.

Eight of the nine Cree communities marched February 18 in support of this brave little boy. Ouje-Bougoumou marched the following day.

The turnout in each community was phenomenal. For many of the communities it seemed like everyone participated. Money was also raised to go towards expenses for the family while they're in Montreal with Khayden.

"I just want to thank all the communities for their prayers and everything they're doing to fight against child abuse and child negligence," said Khayden's grandfather. "I wonder how a two-and-a-half-year-old boy can affect so much love and prayer from so many people. [Because of this incident] a lot of people started to look at their kids and remember what they have," Ronnie said. "I'm sure he'll get better, I'm sure he'll walk out of that hospital."

The support was tremendous, said Daniel-Mark Stewart, the representative for Eastmain and the vice chairman on the Cree Board of Health and Social Services. He estimates that in his hometown of Eastmain, there were roughly 350 to 400 people who turned out to march. Considering Eastmain's population is around 650 people in total, he speculated that the only ones who didn't participate were the elders and infants.



Deputy Chief

Girls from Grade 5 in Mistissini

Jane Loon



Students showing Support for Khayden Otter in Waswanipi

The amount of time each walk took varied in every community, but Eastmain's walk lasted an hour and a half on that Wednesday afternoon.

Many people in Waswanipi wore yellow ribbons to show their love and support for Khayden.

Mark-Stewart says the idea to have the "walk against violence" came when Waswanipi's Chief, Robert Kitchen, notified the band councils of the other eight communities that Waswanipi was going to be staging a walk in support of Khayden. When he heard about it, Mark-Stewart and some of his friends decided that this would be "a step in fighting against violence." From there, his group started sending out communiqués to let people know about their plan to have the walk simultaneously in every community. He also went on the radio to promote the idea. The support from each community was awe-inspiring.

"A lot of people felt angry and were in disbelief," said Mark-Stewart. "They were very saddened by the news; there were a lot of mixed emotions."

Mark-Stewart says that more needs to be done, and the walk is just the beginning. "A lot of people are going to try to take measures to prevent this from ever happening again. Perhaps even look at a policy that each community would have where there would be a background check on people that come in and

out of Eeyou Istchee. If they're going to be working here, especially with kids, we can at least do a background check on them."

"Hopefully we'll learn from this and it'll never happen again. I think there should be a community-driven process established, and it should mention that violence will no longer be tolerated, especially towards young kids," he said.

The Otter and Rupert families would like to thank the nine Cree communities as well as Moose Factory and Moosonee for all their prayers and financial support for Khayden. They would also like to thank the Waswanipi police, social services, and the doctors and nurses who have done and continue to do such a great job.

Correction:

The Nation would like to issue an apology for the brief about little Khayden Otter that appeared in the last issue.

We would like to apologize to the Police, Social Services, Khayden's father, Tony Rupert, his foster mother Charlotte Ottereyes and his mother Judy Otter and the rest of the Otter family.

All of the staff at the Nation are thinking of Khayden and hoping and praying that he gets better.



CULTURAL GATHERING

It's an idea that came from the elders, a "build it and they will come" sort of notion. Over a year ago, the elders in Whapmagoostui met with the elders in Chisasibi to talk about coming together and sharing, as their ancestors used to do long before today's modern communities were established.

Never underestimate the power of the elders, as from March 14-27, participants from the two communities will be coming together to share their traditional teachings and values at the second cultural exchange gathering to be held at Wawa Lake. Last year's exchange held at Burton Lake was a great success with over 200 participants and they have high hopes

for this year's gathering as well.

Elizabeth Dick is the Cultural Director for Whapmagoostui and one of the organizers. "We go there to camp together, but more like sharing the teachings, knowledge and wisdom of our elders to the younger people," she says. "The children are taught how to set a net on the lake in the winter time, and other stuff like the way our people used to live: the chores the children used to do like getting wood. But the things that are happening in the camp that children observe, they also learn that way too, by observing how people do things in the camp."

The direction comes entirely from the elders, with the funding and the

help to pull it off, coming from everyone: the schools, the trappers, the band councils and other entities. People are hired to get the wood and set up the camps.

Participants of all ages attend, from elders to high school students, with the goal of carrying on the traditions of the people and maintaining strong ties between the communities. But says Dick, "It's also to visit the land where this generation has never been to before and it helps the people to heal together with the land and feel refreshed after the gathering where we share stories, legends and make new friends, reunite with old friends. It has to do with everything, mentally, physically, spiritually."

WINTER CARNIVAL TIME

Its time to get out there and enjoy the last busy days of winter with some fun and games at the local winter carnivals. There are lots of activities, indoors and outdoors, to partake in. Below is a listing of dates at the time of press for each community. Activities will be posted in the community or you can call the contact people for any questions you have. So git on out there and have yerself a rowdy good ole time!

Eastmain: March 15 – 21: cultural skills competition, outdoors events such as snowshoeing and tea boiling, indoors tournaments. For more info call George B. Cheezoo @ 977-3080

Mistissini: March 18 – 22: for

more info call Jean Baptiste Loon @ 923-3461, ext: 322

Nemaska: info call Jim Blackned @ 673-2512

Oj: weekends of March 6-7, 13-14: with activities including skidoo races and snow shoe races; followed by the "First Snow Shoe" ceremony on March 15th, to coincide with the return of the Wellness Journey walkers. For more info, you can call Rosie, Glen or Anna @ 745-3911

Waskaganish: for info call Hugo Cowboy @ 895-2882

Waswanipi: March 22-28: ski-do races. Culture games (fastest buck-saw, portage, target shooting) regular games (relay skating, snowshoe baseball) and snowshoe races. For

more info call the Recreation Department @ 753-2450

Wemindji: the winter carnival got underway the weekend of February 21-22 with a fireman's brunch. The activities will be held on the weekends to encourage and accommodate as many participants as possible. Other events planned include a broomball tournament, snow sculpturing, and an ice fishing tournament, which is already underway and goes on until March. For activities and dates, call Sam Gilpin @ 978-0264

Whapmagoostui: March 14 – 27: with traditional winter carnival activities. For more info contact Elizabeth or Robbie Dick @ 929-3384

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Illustrations by: Brian Webb



Old Man Winter

Told by Sandy Masty

Translated by Brian Webb

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I will tell a story of a man long ago. This was the time when the Cree people had very strong shamanistic power. This particular man was fully grown but there is no explanation to how he survived since both his parents had passed away. Others must've raised him. Both his parents had died from exposure to the cold. They had frozen to death.

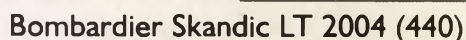
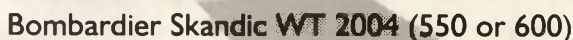
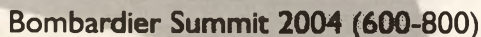
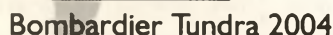
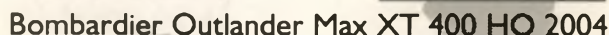
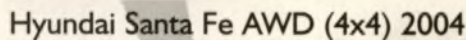
In the springtime, the snow was melting quickly. As he walked around in the forest searching for game, he came across a small patch of snow. It was melting quickly in the sun. The death of his parents was always on his mind. He talked to the small patch of snow. He said, "Do you see? You can't exist forever. You made my parents suffer very much."

But the snow replied to the man, "I suppose this is the way it is. I cannot exist forever. I exist only for a short time." But the snow was insulted by the man's remark. The snow added, "Next winter, I'm sure you'll feel my presence."

The man simply walked away, leaving the small patch of snow to melt in the heat of the beautiful spring day. But the threat from the snow remained with him.

During the summer, he made his lodge. He

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covered it with many layers for insulation. He used caribou hair to insulate his lodge. The covering on his lodge became very thick. He also gathered a considerable amount of firewood to use for the winter.

He took the antler of a female caribou. He knew that he would need it for the up coming winter. He prepared the antler. He polished it and greased it with caribou fat made from the leg marrow.

The man prepared for the winter. He seemed to know that he would have a very difficult time during the winter because of what the snow had said to him. The man hunted continuously and preserved plenty of meat. He knew he could not stay outside at all during the winter. He made clothing from the caribou fur, his coat and his pants.

As November arrived, he noticed the cold. This is the first of the winter months. But he still did not have what he thought he would need for the winter.

As December arrived, he knew that he would start to suffer from the cold. On the first day, the month walks in and is here for the entire duration of the month, sometimes 30 days and sometimes 31 days. This would be the first time he would need his caribou antler.

Before dawn, the man got up. This was the first day of December. He made his fire. He took the antler and heated it next to the fire and rubbed it and greased it with caribou fat.

As the light of dawn broke, he listened. He heard someone walking towards his camp outside. The man had his antler ready. He heard someone walking towards his entrance. A pair of hands reached in. The man gave the hands the antler. As he gave the hands the antler, he said, "Grandfather, snap this."

The pair of hands began to try to snap the antler. After three attempts, the hands failed to break the antler. The pair of hands let go of the antler and the man could hear footsteps walking away.

The man kept the antler. He stayed at his camp for the entire month without leaving at all. He stayed around his camp. He didn't go hunting at all. He knew the other months would be coming also.

He knew the next month would be stronger. This would be January. As the month of

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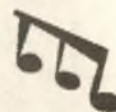
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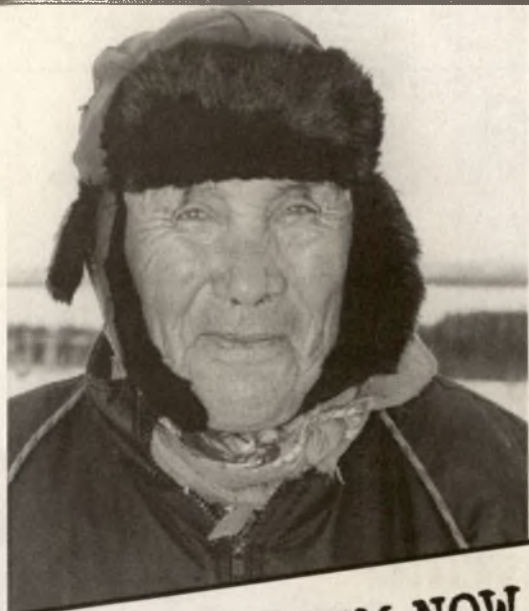
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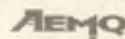
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*Building strong and healthy communities requires the right choices.
Eating healthy foods can contribute to strengthening Eeyou Istchee.*

YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO MAKING A STRONGER AND HEALTHIER EYYOU ISTCHEE

- As a pregnant woman, I eat nutritious foods so my baby will be healthy.
- As the mother of a newborn, I breastfeed my baby to give him/her the best milk.
- As parents, we set a good example by promoting healthy foods in our home and providing healthy meals and snacks.
- As a child or a teenager, I eat 3 nutritious meals a day.
- As a Cree, I teach my children and grandchildren about Cree traditional foods and their recipes.
- As a restaurant, we offer healthy, reasonably priced meal options and advertise them to our clients.
- As a grocery store, we make sure healthy foods are available for our customers: a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grain products, lean choices of meats, poultry and fish, lower-fat dairy products, good fats and oils, etc.
- As a school, we promote healthy eating at the school by creating a healthy food program.
- As a First Nation Council, the Cree School Board and the Cree Health Board, we promote healthy eating through programs and when our institutions provide food, we will ensure these foods are healthy.

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December ended, January was coming the next morning. He has his antler prepared.

Before the break of dawn, the man rubbed the antler with fat and heated it next to the fire. As the light of dawn arrived, he heard footsteps coming. These footsteps sounded more powerful. The sound of walked stopped at the man's entrance. A pair of hands emerged, reaching in. These hands were very big and looked very strong. The man gave the caribou antler to the pair of hands and said, "Grandfather, snap this."

The pair of hands attempted to break the antler. After three times, the hands could not break the antler and let it go. The reason why he told the hands to snap the antler was to contend with Old Man Winter. If the antler was snapped, the man would not make it through the month and would die from exposure, just like his parents.

The month wore on and the cold was extreme. The man's outings were minimal. He stayed at his camp and was able to endure the month since the antler was not broken.

As the month of January ended, February was coming. This was the month the man feared the most. February is the coldest month. He feared that this month would break the antler. But if the antler were not broken, the winter months would be behind him.

Before the break of dawn, the man greased the antler and heated it next to the fire. The man had doubts if he would be able to survive the month of February. As the light of dawn broke, he heard footsteps coming. These footsteps sounded louder and more powerful than the month before. The man rubbed the antler and a pair of hands reached into his lodge from the entrance. The hands were enormous. The man hesitated, fearing for his life but gave the antler to the hands. He said, "Grandfather, snap this."

The pair of hands took the antler. The man was filled with anxiety as the pair of hands began bending the antler. After three attempts, the hands could not snap the antler. The hands gave up and let go of the antler. The man endured.

As February ended, March was coming. Before the break of dawn, the man prepared his antler. As the light of dawn broke, the man heard footsteps coming towards his camp. This time, the footsteps sounded weak. The pair of



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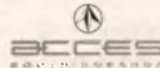
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BOLIVIA

BY WILL NICHOLS



As I flew into Bolivia

I kept thinking this was the country where the famous outlaws Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid made their last stand. You get weird thoughts while on a plane. They had apparently worked in a silver mine but stole from others. Finally it caught

up to them and they had a shootout in St. Vincente in 1922.

It was the very same silver that drew the Spanish conquistadors to Bolivia. Of course it wasn't Bolivia then, that would come much later.

Then it was a part of the Inca Empire

that Pizarro conquered. The Spanish discovered rich silver deposits in 1544 and created the town of Potosí to mine it. At one time it was the largest community in South America and was the base of the Spanish economy for almost two centuries.

Pizarro and one of his commanders would fight over control of this region until it was brought firmly back into the Spanish empire in South America.



It would remain there until Simon Bolivar came along to drive the Spanish out of Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and what would become Bolivia. Under Spanish rule Bolivia was a province of Peru but was renamed in honour of "El Liberador." In 1825 it would become an independent state. Bolivia today is the only landlocked country in South America but it wasn't always. A war with Chile saw its only stretch of coastline annexed.

Perhaps it's volatile history of dictators and military rule had something to do with keeping this country poor. Over a period of 25 years (1964-1989) Bolivia had 19 presidents (13 were generals), with only two completed a full term in office.

During that time the most famous of South American revolutionaries Ernesto "Che" Guevara, and his tiny liberation party came to Bolivia. He would ultimately be killed there in 1967 trying to help the poor of the country.

Democracy would have to wait until 1980 to become a reality for this poor country.

All in all I was excited to be traveling into Bolivia. The main reason was Aboriginal people make up 80 per cent of the population, partly because

Bolivia is so remote compared to its neighbours. They are also the poorest of the poor.

La Paz is the highest national capital in the world at an altitude of four kilometres above sea level. There are few trees in or around La Paz. This city though is bustling with many types of people. You'll see Native women wearing bowler hats (I later found out that if they are on top of their heads firmly, the woman is married and to the side means they are single).



I stayed at the President Hotel, near a famous church, the Iglesia de San Francisco. It blended both Native and Spanish styles in its construction and was something to see. Much more interesting was the market around and near this church. Shops sold everything, from books, watches, pottery, batteries, clothes, food and just about anything you could think of and a few I didn't. Wandering up and behind the church was the "Witch's Market." There were charms, amulets, strange brews and potions, candies, silver jewelry and fetuses. The llama fetuses were used in a number of ways. The most popular magic method guaranteeing pregnancy... so it was said. I noticed a couple consulting the woman witch and pointing to one but decided to move on before seeing what they did with the fetus. It is a part of the culture, that while many

are devout Catholics, they will also consult the witches on different matters. Seeing all this makes you know you aren't in Kansas or Eeyou Istchee anymore. With that feeling I enjoyed my first night in La Paz just walking around and seeing the sights. It was colourful, different and interesting. One word of warning though, a lot of the streets are narrow and one way. Cars seem to take the corners fast and without looking. In fact Bolivia has some of the worst road conditions in South America.

The next morning I was on yet another plane flying out to Rurrenabaque.



This is a little frontier town on the Río Beni, about 300km north of La Paz. Talk about untouched paradise. You are loaded into a small plane with about 14 other people. This small plane, at the end of the trip, suddenly turns sideways and then descends in a strafing dive. You land on a grass runway feeling like some drug lord making a pick-up or the police making a surprise visit to someone. The airport was small but well maintained and I was greeted with smiles.

The original inhabitants of the area are called the Tacana. What is fascinating about these people is they actively resisted both Christianity and Western-style civilization. This, perhaps, accounted for the unspoiled quality of the area.

Shopping in this town was great. There are tons of little shops specializing in everything. A pair of handmade boots would cost around \$30 for example and a great meal, a few dollars. The roads are dirt and you see a lot of motorcycles. No one asks for your driver's permit when you rent a motorcycle but will ask for your passport. Do not part with it. A simple call to the travel agency cleared the way to riding around. Since this country is poor with an average salary running at around \$1,000 a year things were relatively inexpensive overall.

My guide Eric told me we were ready to go and we were off to



Chalalan Lodge by boat. The jungle here is different from the Peruvian Amazon. It has beautiful scenic mountains and you get a good look at them as you travel up the Beni River. From the Beni you make a right turn and travel for four hours on the Tuichi River. We saw many types of birds, capybaras and some very colourful butterflies. Finally we arrived at Chalalan Lodge in Bolivia's pristine Madidi National Park. The lodge is wholly owned by the indigenous community of San Jose Uchupiamonas. Eric, himself one of the Quechuas people, would tell me of the hard work his community did to make the lodge possible. It would be six years of community members volunteering

their time to build it and the reputation it has today.

Two foreign aid organizations would help out (financing from the International Development Bank and technical assistance from Conservation International).

The lodge is a prime example of what a community-based eco-tourism venture can achieve. Although the community received help from outside organizations in the beginning, the lodge is now owned and managed entirely by the indigenous Quechuas. Made from mahogany, it is surrounded by 4.5 million acres of protected wilderness. Canada, once again, was a player in making this area a protected wilderness. It was a continuation of the agreement that I saw in Peru to protect the Amazon rainforests. It is nice to know that Canada is doing so much to help out this planet's ecosystem.



Chalalan is not intrusive, blending in with the natural surroundings. It was built using material from the Amazon forest and is powered by solar energy. The lake is protected and only dugout canoes are allowed on the lake. I was itching to try one out almost as soon as I got there... much to the amusement of the locals. I had a chance to paddle around and saw an amazing abundance of life. There were monkeys, caimans, turtles, hoatzins (stinky bird), and macaws. All yelling, barking and

continued on page 24

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A Special Tourist Vacation Spot Lake Titicaca

Traditionally regarded as the highest navigable body of water in the world (though there are higher lakes in Chile and Peru), Lake Titicaca is immense: its dimensions measure 233km (145mi) from northwest to southeast and 97km (60mi) from northeast to southwest. The lake has an indented shoreline, 36 islands and exceptionally clear sapphire-blue water. Titicaca is revered by the Indians who live on its shores, and the Islas del Sol and Islas de la Luna, two islands in the lake, are the legendary sites of the Inca's creation myths. The main town in the area is Copacabana, which has a sparkling white Moorish-style cathedral and is host to the Fiesta de la Virgen de Candelaria. Isla Suriqui is world-renowned for its totora reed boats, Isla Kalahuta for its stone tombs and Isla Incas is reputed in legend to have an underground network of passageways linking it to the old Inca capital of Cuzco in Peru.

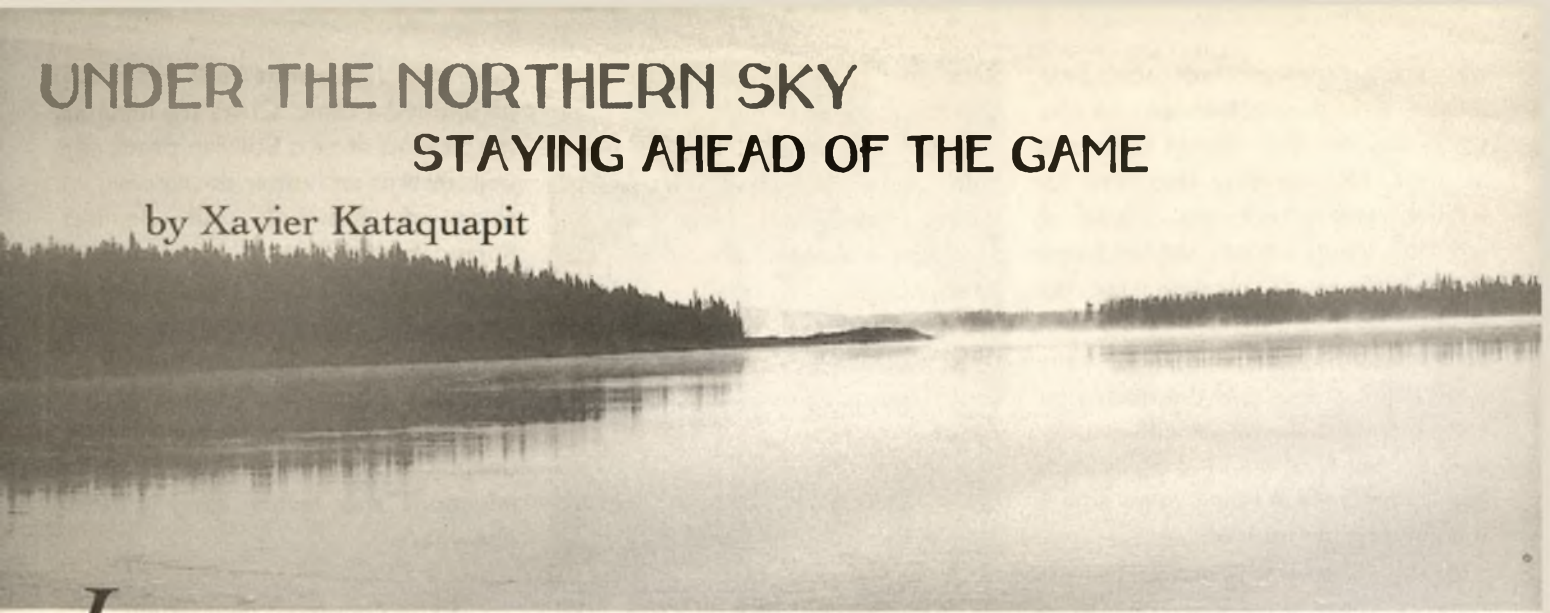
Travelers should wear protective head gear around the lake because the thin air results in scorchingly high levels of ultraviolet radiation. Half of the lake lies within the borders of Peru; Puno is the principal settlement and main centre for excursions on the Peruvian shore of the lake.

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UNDER THE NORTHERN SKY

STAYING AHEAD OF THE GAME

by Xavier Kataquapit



I grew up in my home community of Attawapiskat during a time when technology in the world was changing. You would never have known it if you lived in the middle of the wilderness on the banks of the Attawapiskat River. What was commonplace in terms of technology in southern communities took a long time to reach us.

My friends and I ignored the television to a great degree simply because there wasn't much to watch. There were only four channels at that time. We entertained each other outdoors by playing near our homes or exploring our community, the riverside and the woods nearby. Our families were also close to the land and I had many opportunities to visit remote camps and locations along the coast, the islands on the salt-water bay and along the rivers and creeks of James Bay. Life was more about hunting and being out in nature.

My new friends out here in the south understand where I have come from. They realize that children growing up in a remote community have far fewer opportunities or exposure to new technologies. It surprises them when they discover just how much I know about computers and their operation. I have learned to work with popular operating systems, how to install software and hardware and how to use and maintain these systems. I never thought too much of this ability. I have always had an interest in the computer, as it is a tool that fits perfectly with my interest in writing. I use computers to produce, edit and store my work. I also use a computer to hook up to the internet to send out my stories and communicate with the rest of the world.

When I started high school in Timmins in 1989, computers were just becoming popular and I realized early on that it would be an advantage to learn as much as I could about them. It wasn't until I switched to attending secondary school in my home community on the James Bay coast in 1992 that I had my first chance to use a computer with a full operating system. Most people back home had not even heard of computers but luckily for me my brother-in-law, Brian Wesley had a keen interest in technology and he was hooked on these new gadgets. He gave a system to me and my younger brothers Paul and Joseph, as a hand me down.

We happily enjoyed our new computer and loaded arcade games and flight simulators into its memory. We also loaded desktop publishing software to produce our own newsletters of funny articles and jokes, then printed them out for our family to enjoy. We never had anyone around to teach us. We set up the system ourselves and learned how to operate the different software programs. Over a period of about three years, Brian kept passing down outdated systems as he kept upgrading to the latest computers. We had no fear and attacked the computers hungry for more knowledge.

Just about anybody can afford to get their kids a used computer these days and that is all you need to get started. Believe me, any young person who has the chance to work on computers will master the challenge in a short time.

I encourage any young person to learn as much as they can about computers. First Nation youth might think that they are isolated or removed from the rest of the world. If they have a computer and an internet connection, they can access the whole world. If there is no internet connection, a computer with some of the latest features allows a person to use it as an entertainment system that will load, create and mix their favourite music or allow them to come up with their own productions.

You don't have to do anything special to get into computers. I never took any course or educational program to learn how to use a computer. I think the best way to learn is to simply sit down and go at it. If you run into a problem ask a friend or consult a tutorial, as most programs come with one. If you are on line then you can access the internet to gather resource material and read about what others are doing.

People point out the disadvantages of computers as being all consuming and taking people away from reality or nature. I suppose there is a down side to this technology but like everything else in life, with moderation many good things can happen. More than ever knowledge is power and as First Nation's people if we are not involved in the leading edge of computer technology we will be left out of the loop. So get a lap top with a good battery and write a story under a tree somewhere.

screeching. It was great and I only padded a little during the day. As I've wrote before, the caimons come out at night, so swimming by choice or accident is not really encouraged or advisable. Nature hikes into the jungle at this lodge aren't only during the day. Walks at dusk into the night are part of its attraction. I saw, but luckily didn't experience, the bite of the many poisonous spiders. I was extremely lucky to see a pair of 300 pound tapirs feeding. Unfortunately as I set up the camera the timid beasts took off.

At the camp some American tourists came in. These brave souls traveled by bicycle over 300 miles from the Andes Mountains near La Paz to the lowland jungles and rain forests to Rurrenabaque. They would descend 13,000 feet during their journey. The plucky bikers were traveling to raise money for the Rio Beni Health Project. The reason why they were raising money is that the late Doctor Lou



Netzer had traveled around after retiring from his Santa Barbara, California practice (where the bikers came from). His travels brought him and his wife into the Bolivian jungle. There he learned that a trip to the doctor cost the equivalent of a half month's pay. To buy the prescriptions took the rest of the month's pay. He thought this was outrageous and with

help from his friends back in the US he opened a clinic. Costs are minimal for patients at two Bolivian pesos per visit. Interns and other doctors would show up and help out. Besides Rurrenabaque with a population of 12,000, the Rio Beni Health Project serves 60 jungle communities. Most of these communities are only serviceable by boat trips taking hours. Before the Rio Beni Health Project, people in these villages would die of infections and fevers easily treated elsewhere.

To be continued next issued.

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100-BIRTHS

I would like to welcome my precious sweet little bundle of joy into this world and in my life. My son Judas George Mark Shecaplo-Blacksmith who was born on January 21st, 2004 at 11:55 pm, weighing at 7 lbs 13 Oz in Chibougamau. My son, you mean everything to me. All I can say is you complete me in everyway. When Mommy has a bad dau, she looks up to you to make it a better day. I luv you so much there aren't enough words to express how I feel. I will always be there for you. Lots of luv to you my boy. Love always Monmmy Melanie Gunne

Announcing the birth of Lazarus Jacob Blacksmith, born on February 5, 2004, weighing 7 lbs 13 oz, to proud parents Matthew & Amanda Blacksmith



101 - BIRTHDAYS

Wishing the very best & a very Happy Birthday to my dear friend Balyn. (Feb. 16th) It's great to be your friend and knowing you in my life. I pray special blessings upon you and your family. May the Good Lord keep you near to his heart. Also May you Have a beautiful day gurl :) *smiles* Take care ok? See you again sometime, Lov ya! From your best buddy in Val d'Or. Guess who??

Sending Happy Birthday wishes to my sister Cynthia Polson in Waswanipi on February 16th! You are one of my greatest friends and I love

you sis. Miss you & the kids very much. Take good care of yourself & visit me sometime if you ever come back this way (lol) Have a beautiful day! From your lil craziest bro in Val d'Or.

I'd like to wish a Happy Birthday to a friend of mine Ethel Moar Cookish from Chisasibi, Her Birthday will be on February 27, 2004. Hope you'll have fun on your special day. But, celebrate them in a good way so that you remember every minute of it. Wishing you the very best. I love you so much my dear friend, more them you will ever know or imagine... Take care and may God bless you and be with you always. In true friendship and love: Verna Bobbish Cheezo from Eastmain.

Birthday Greetings going out to a 'kewlchik' in Brampton, On. I hope you enjoy your day little buddy!!...and say 'HI' to your sistas too....from Creelynx!!

A belated birthday wish to a beautiful girl Alayna-Star T.Ottereyes on January 23/04. Sorry we couldn't be there to celebrate your birthday with you but we thought about you a lot. I heard you had a blast at your birthday party and I hope Carole-Anns was nice to your friends. We can't wait to come home again to see you girls! We love and miss you girls so much. Love always, Harry and Queenie (all the way from Hull) xoxoxoxo

Happy ?? Birthday to my aunt Elizabeth Trapper on February 20/04 (don't worry, I won't tell your age...lol). Enjoy your special day with Allen and your precious daughters. We're excited about your wedding this summer, we are so happy to be a part of your wedding party. We love you and miss you all. Thank you very much for your support when college life is challenging, we know you're always

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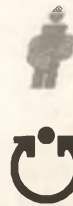
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Luc Lafrenière

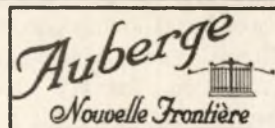
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there for us Take extra good care of your beautiful adorable girls. Love always, your neice Queenie and Harry (Hull)

Happy belated birthday to my wonderful and loving grandmother Maggie Neeposh on January 9/04 (better late than never). I didn't forget about your special day grandma! No words can express the love I have towards you and grandpa. Hope you and grandpa will visit us again, we love having you here. May the good lord bless you and keep you safe in his loving care. We love you and miss you so much, once again happy birthday grandma! Love you always, from your first granddaughter Queenie and Harry Ottereyes (hull) xoxoxoxo

Birthday wishes to a special person Abel Ottereyes on March 16/04. Wow, you're turning 13 already! May you enjoy your special day and we hope you'll get what you wanted for your birthday. You're gift will be waiting for you in Hull. We wish you can come for a visit soon, we know how badly you want to come here. Don't forget how much we love and miss you and we are always there for you. Keep working hard in school, it's the only way to a great life. Once again happy birthday Abel! With love, your uncle Harry and Queenie Ottereyes (hull) xoxoxo

We would like to wish a very Happy belated Birthday to Benjamin Schecapio-Blacksmith. Whose was on January 26th. Thank you for being such a good father and partner to me and Judas and Love you so much. Love from Melanie and your son Judas. Xoxoxo

I would like to wish my sister Karen T. Matoush a Happy Birthday on March 9, 2004. You are getting older like me and you can't help it but to move on and enjoy life?

I trust that you will receive all the wonderful gifts you deserve. Take care, and I'll be seeing you soon. With all my Love... Lucy.

We would like to say a Happy Birthday to my mom Elizabeth Matoush on March 6th, 2004. And to my Brother Donald Matoush on March 7th, 2004. Both in Mistissini Hope you two have fun of your Birthday..Once again **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU BOTH.** We luv & miss you alot...X.o.X.o.X.o From: Sheila & Elijah Shashaweskum (Wemindji)

We would like to say a Happy First Birthday to Juwanna Duff. On March 17th, 2004 in Chisasibi. Hey girl your going to be one now it's so fast your turning one. Once again **HAPPY BIRTHDAY GIRL..**lvu & Miss you alot...X.o.X.o.X.o....And to my Borthor Matthew Matoush on March 12, 2004 From: Sheila & Elijah Shashaweskum (Wemindji)

We would like to say a Happy Birthday to Larissa Matoush Ottereyes on March 5th, 2004, in Waswanipi. Hope you have fun on your birthday. Once again happy birthday girl lvu miss you...X.o.X.o.X.o From: S.S.M.S & E.G.S (Wemindji)

I would like to wish my JoomShoom, Stanley a Happy Birthday on March 6th. Hope you enjoy every minute on your birthday. Hugs & Kisses, Faith. (Wemindji)

103 - ANNIVERSARIES

Happy 21st Anniversary to my wonderful loving parents, William and Marie-Line Kitchen on January 28th 2004. Mom and Dad, this is a reminder of how much nicer this world is ...because of you and how special you are to me. Today. Tomorrow. And forever. I don't know what I did to deserve such great parents , but whatever it was...I hope

you know that I treasure you so much, and I'm eternally grateful that I'm your daughter. Wishing you Happiness Today and Always. I love you and miss you guys so much!! Love Always and Forever, Your Daughter Hillory. xxx...

300 - PERSONALS

To a lady by the name of "Beauty of the Rising Sun" in Timmins, Ont. You are such a great friend!! Don't you give up on ya dreams ok? Everything will be okay & some sweet day you will be so happy with your accomplishments. Just keep doing what you do and focus on your success. Remember that I am always here to listen to you and to be there for you. Take good care of your lil boy & be strong my friend. Smile & keep on with enjoying your dayz, remember that

you can do anything & everything is possible if you just believe. From Mr. Kraftdinner in Val d'Or.

I am looking for a family fluent in Cree to host me in order that I can learn my language. My mother was fluent in Cree & Saulteaux, but she was a residential school kid and this is why I think she did not teach us kids our own language. My family that speaks Cree and I are estranged. I will contribute to the host family in monetary and practical ways such as work for them and help out in this way. Please contact me if you think you are interested in this or know someone who might be. Thank you. Roberta Desnomie. If you are interested in becoming a host family, please contact The Nation. Tannisha Jolly



We just want our sweet, beautiful little cousin in Waskaganish to know albeit, we hardly see you, we really love you, miss you and long to hold you. Your picture is all we have, is always in front of us, where we can see it. Each evening at bedtime. You are in our prayers so, the almighty can

watch over you and your big family in Waskaganish. We will always be so grateful of life and love here in Waswanipi. Take care. P.S. we will never forget the first time we saw you, it was instant love. From Paul Dixon and Family (Isacc) and the late Johnny Blacksmith and family.

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Eeyou Nameess Corporation

Over the past few decades, traditional fishing and the eating of fish has gone down considerably. As a consequence, many Cree of this generation eat less fish than the generations of the past. As part of keeping the tradition alive, the Eeyou Nameess Corporation was created.

"Our Goal is to restore and strengthen Cree fisheries for Cree aspirations and needs."

Contest rules:

- Contest open to all Cree beneficiaries.
- Write a short story with a minimum of 500 words typed or written in a legible way.
- You can write the story in Cree, English or French.
- The story must be about fish or fishing and include what makes fish so good to eat.
- Include a cover letter that contains your contact information (Name, address, daytime phone #, email, etc)
- Must submit before the contest deadline: April 2, 2004.

Tips:

- Ask someone who can help give you a good story, such as Parents, Grandparents, an Elder...
- Be sure to proof read your story (or ask for help). The more presentable, the better!

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